

Johannes Sonderegger



"Father was a kind man -- very understanding and sympathetic.
He worked extremely hard to make life more pleasant for us"

Bertha Buehler Sonderegger



“...she was both mother and father to us most of our lives...a widow for over thirty years....
Honesty was an influence for good in the lives of her children, for mother's values were lasting
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Johannes and Bertha Buehler Sonderegger

Memories and history of Bertha Buehler Sonderegger written by their daughter Lena Ida S. Anderson (Aunt Ida).

Memories of a mother or grandmother are among the choicest of one's life. There are many grandchildren in our families who do not remember my mother, and not one who had the opportunity of knowing my father. Even some of my brothers and sisters had no memory or a very slight memory of my father, and not one ever knew a grandmother or grandfather as all of them spent their entire lives in their native Switzerland. There is always a feeling of sadness not to have known a father or mother or grandparents.

My father and mother were born in Switzerland. Both joined the Church in that faraway land, were baptized there, and immigrated to Utah.

Father was born Nov. 30, 1830. He married his first wife, Anna Maria Lemp, in Switzerland on Nov. 27, 1857 and came to the United States in 1872. Both had been baptized in 1870.

My father bought an acre of ground in Midway and built a one-room house. He and his first wife lived there for a number of years before Anna Maria died from typhoid fever. Then in 1878 he married mother (Bertha Buehler). They too lived in the one-room house but soon added another room. He shingled one little cottage which was the first house in Midway to have shingles. Father even made the shingles as they couldn't be purchased at the time.

Father was an expert stonecutter, mason and carpenter who found his skills in demand in the early history of Heber Valley. He worked as an artisan on the Salt Lake Temple for twelve years. He worked on the Wasatch Stake Tabernacle during the entire time of its construction and also built the brick hotel at the old Schneitter Hot Pots which is now known as the Virginia House at the Homestead Resort.

When the first Midway Second Ward church was built, father constructed the cornerstone April 4, 1881, and helped build the church. Also, he built three large stores in Heber, Utah for John Turner Sr., a house for Jacob Probst near Huber's Grove, two large stores in Park City, foundations for several houses in Midway, and various other structures.

Mother was born on August 15, 1856. She joined the LDS Church at the age of nineteen years and came to Salt Lake City alone. After being baptized in Switzerland her family became very bitter toward her and disowned her. A sister and her husband came to Utah a few years after Mother came -- her only relatives in this part of the world. She received her schooling in Switzerland and spoke French and German very fluently.

Mother was 22 years old when she married, and father was 48, more than double her age. Nine children had been (were) born to them, but a boy, George William, died at the age of 13 months.

Very briefly, I have told of my parents' birth and early life. Now, I'd like to mention some of the unforgettable happenings and some personal glimpses that I can recall about them.

As my father died when I was just 6 years old, my memories of him are very limited. I do recall very vividly, though, an unusual experience. There were no automobiles when I was a child. Horses were used for pulling wagons and buggies. Many things could not be purchased in Midway or Heber so trips had to be taken to Salt Lake City for supplies they desperately needed. Father would drive his horses hitched to a big heavy wagon to Salt Lake City twice a year -- in the spring and in the fall. He would purchase parts for farm machinery, supplies and parts for his grain binder, and various other tools and household materials. Each time he made one of these trips he would take two or three of us children with him as it came our turn to go. How we looked forward to this most exciting event! Our lives had very little amusement so to go to the "Big City" was an unusual happening. It took two days to travel to Salt Lake and two for the return trip. We'd camp for one night each way and sleep on the ground with mother's fluffy quilts under and over us. Our food was cooked on a bonfire. Usually we'd stay in Salt Lake for a night or two and visit relatives. Father had a sister living there who was very good to us. She'd present each with gifts and some to give our brothers and sisters at home.

Both my parents were very industrious people -- always busy at something. When father wasn't doing his own farming or chores, he operated a grain binder for people that wanted this service. In this way he earned additional income for his large family. Often he would be miles from home, but always at noon he wanted hot food, and regardless of the distance, the children would carry the food to him in a large tin bucket. It was a very tiresome job to walk and lug milk and hot food. Occasionally, the bucket would fall or tip, spilling some of the contents. My sister Bertha, while on the lunch detail, spilled the milk. Worried about father not having his usual noon drink, she went to a farm house along the way and asked for some milk to fill the empty bottle. Father immediately knew that this wasn't our good clean milk and instructed all to never again beg for some.

Father was a kind man -- very understanding and sympathetic. He worked extremely hard to make life more pleasant for us. He built a large comfortable house that had many flights of stairs leading to the second story rooms. Our ceilings were different from other houses in that they were made of fancy grooved wood that we thought very attractive. I can recall vividly the ceiling of mother's and father's room with a beautiful star artistically and skillfully pieced together and fitted into the ceiling. Father was very meticulous and spent hours cutting and fitting the pieces together -- a tedious and detailed job. Finally it was painted and varnished and appeared as a real work of art.

In order to work on the Salt Lake Temple and still maintain his home in Midway, Father would walk over the mountains each weekend. He'd come home Saturday and return. Imagine covering that distance after a week of hard labor! (Tell about the encounter he had with a bear while eating choke cherries. Also, about the flash flood near Huber's Grove.)

I have many memories of mother as she was both mother and father to us most of our lives. Fred, the oldest in our family, was just 14 years old and Ernest a year old when father died. There were eight of us for mother to rear alone. She surely needed added strength and health to carry out her many responsibilities as a widow for over thirty years.

Some of my earliest recollections of our home was hearing Mother tell about her early life in Switzerland. We loved to hear these wonderful stories. Often she'd sing songs and recite poems in her native tongue. We were taught the Swiss language and could converse with our parents and others. Mother loved to relate stories of her life as a girl, and we were avid listeners.

Mother was a good homemaker in every possible way. I'm grateful that we were taught economy in our home. Mother had a meager income after father died, but she always paid her tithing and was thrifty in every way.

She was truly a wonderful manager. A large vegetable garden was always planted near the fruit orchard. To tide us over the winter months our cellar was filled with potatoes and various other vegetables, a barrel of sauerkraut, and many canned and raw fruits. In a vacant room upstairs smoked meats were stored. These had been smoked in our smoke house which had been built specially for that purpose. A flock of chickens furnished us eggs and meat, and our cows our milk and butter. Very little food had to be purchased for we always lived within our income.

Honesty was an influence for good in the lives of her children, for mother's values were lasting ones -- eternal values. She came here for the church she had joined in her native land. We attended Sunday School and Sacrament meetings together as a family. She was proud of her membership in the church.

"Cleanliness is next to Godliness" was one of Mother's beliefs. She was very orderly about her house and other buildings and gardens, etc. She was a tidy housekeeper and always neat and clean in her appearance. She took a great deal of pride in dressing and looking nice.

We had such a sunny and cheerful kitchen. A large window on the south wall was always filled with various bright house plants, especially geraniums and fuchsias. A tall oleander shrub-like plant in a large wooden bucket had a choice spot by the west window. It bloomed once a year and was a mass of pink blossoms.

Working long hours was necessary for Mother to accomplish the many household and outdoor duties. There were no modern conveniences. We lived before the days of automobiles, radio, talking movies, airplanes, automatic washers, dryers, and refrigerators. Clothes were washed by rubbing them on a washboard -- then the white ones boiled on the stove. The water had to be carried from the outdoor hydrant and heated on the stove. Mother's homemade soap gave forth a lye odor as it bubbled over and through the clothes as they boiled, and occasionally raise them high out of the water to inspect the cleanness of them. When the clothes were whiter than white, they were dipped out of the boiling water, rinsed in two or three different changes of cold water, some rinsed in bluing water, and hung on the line to dry.

Mother knew hardships and hard labor her entire life. Farming in the early days meant back-breaking labor. All of us worked on our two large tracts of acreage located 4-5 miles north of Midway in what was called the Dutch Fields. The girls worked along with the boys in hoeing the garden and harvesting hay and grain.

Fred and Bertha, when just 12 and 14 years old, drove a team of horses with a wagon to Park City to sell produce such as potatoes and various other vegetables, etc. They would go from house to house peddling these things to supplement the family

income. When the older children could be spared from farm work, they worked for others hoeing potatoes, doing household tasks, knitting gloves and stockings, etc.

My mother was a wonderful cook. I never tasted anything in my life that she fixed for us that I didn't like. I can recall how at Christmas time she'd make numerous tasty things -- bratsilis made in a special iron brought from Switzerland, eleven-mile cakes, and a special braided bread. My mouth waters when I think of the apple fritters and foot-long smoked sausages. These she made from choice lean pork, even filling them with her special sausage machine. The smell of freshly baked bread and hot biscuits, baked regularly two or three times each week, still lingers in my memory.

Mother was also an excellent seamstress. She made everything that my sisters and I wore, and we always felt that we were as well dressed as any of our friends. We had an old treadle-type sewing machine that she used to sew countless yards of material into dresses, quilts, tops, shirts for the boys and rags for rugs. She stitched patches on many pairs of overalls and torn and worn dresses. She even made father's and the boys' best suits.

When we were young Indians often came to our place begging for food, especially bread. We were always fearful of seeing them as we'd heard stories of people being killed by them and of squaws whom people called mean. When Mother had an errand to make she'd warn us never to open the door when someone knocked for fear Indians might be there. On this particular day she had just baked 10 large loaves of bread still warm on the kitchen table. Contrary to mother's warning, we opened the door when we heard some queer chattering. There stood several Indians in their bright shawls. They pushed their way into the kitchen, scooped up every loaf of bread and hurried on their way. We were too frightened to protest.

Mother was what you might call an angel of mercy. A call in the middle of the night or a knock at the door in the early morning meant there was someone ill..... We lived where there were no doctors or hospitals. Often people who had sickness in their homes would come for her and she would willingly get out of her warm bed to go with them and do what she could to help relieve pain as best she knew. Every mother had to be nurse and doctor, and many people died from lack of professional help. There were no wonder drugs, no medications such as can be had today. Old family remedies were used.

On one occasion when mother answered a knock in the middle of the night, a strange man asked her to follow him to the other side of town. During their long silent walk, the stranger trudged ahead with a long cane-like stick in his hand, evidently to help him on his way. Finally they arrived at their destination, the home of a friend of mother's. She found a young man, 23 years old, in terrible pain and very ill. Any help was useless as he was beyond assistance and died a few hours later from a ruptured appendix. The stranger was William W. Wilson who later became her son-in-law, husband of her daughter Bertha. Mothers was called upon many.....

My sister Louise was kicked by a horse when a small girl -- the result being a large cut on her forehead. While she was still unconscious, mother quickly and carefully used a sewing needle and thread to sew up the gash. In later years one could not detect where the cut had been. I, too, was kicked by a horse on my chin. I knew I shouldn't have been so near the horse's heels and tried to hide my bleeding chin with my hand. Mother noticed my injury and placed a tobacco poultice on it to prevent infection. When binding

grain father ran a binder needle entirely through the palm of his hand. Mother used her medical knowledge and it healed rapidly.

An outstanding quality of mother's character was her unselfishness. Strangers often came to the door asking for food. They were never turned away. She gave food to neighbors and friends -- many who had come from her native country with families and were so poor they had very little to eat. She would send us children with fresh meat, sausages, bread, garden produce, and pastry to supplement their meager fare. Often on holidays, she'd share her special food with them. She was always thoughtful and concerned for their well-being. Never did she expect or want words of praise for her good deeds.

She had two feather ticks -- one under the bottom sheet and the other atop the bed. It was so light, yet so warm. How high and puffy it appeared!

I can recall the lively horses she had to pull her shiny black buggy with its fancy top to protect one from the sun and storm. It really frightened me to watch her harness and hitch the beautiful spirited Prince horse to the buggy. Fox was another of her horses, but of more subdued nature -- his name derived from his color. She received much satisfaction from this convenient mode of transportation. Often she would visit us at our homes in Heber. On other occasions, she'd have friends accompany her to visit other friends in the valley. She was always very self-sufficient and independent.

Mother loved to have young and old visit our home for an evening of visiting and fun. She had a good sense of humor, enjoyed music and all forms of entertainment.

Even in her later and last years she carried on with the same projects carried on throughout her life. She had a great love for the out-of-doors, and she always had a garden spot. She spent many hours planting and arranging her shrubs and flowers and her houseplants she cherished all her life. She had two cows that she milked and cared for, even using her cream separator. She had a large vegetable garden and planted ample cabbage to make kraut for her family. Her smokehouse was still in use for curing meat. She retained her industrious habits right to the end.

Mother and father were all these things and more to me.

Ad. The children of Bertha and Johannes Buehler and their spouses:

Fredrick married Marian Lindsay Burt

Bertha married William W. Wilson

John married Pauline Gerhard -- John lived in Boston. He a was very accomplished musician playing in concerts, giving music lessons and repairing instruments.

Louise Emily married Robert Clegg

Minnie married James Taylor, later Joseph C McDonald

Lena Ida married Charles Anderson

Emma Cecelia married Jesse Nelson

George William died in infancy

Ernest Ervin married Grace Watkins

The following is taken from a history of Johannes and Bertha Buehler Sonderegger written by their granddaughter, Alberta Sonderegger Provost. She knew Grandma Sonderegger and spent time in their home.

I remember this house so well.....as grandma lived there. With only an acre of ground every bit of it was very important, so grandfather had a dug-out basement – so big for the storage of vegetables and the bottled fruit and sauerkraut barrels. Then on the main floor there was a very large kitchen, stove so very quaint, cupboards not built in, one for best dishes, another for food, a sink with running cold water. The cream separator had its special place and a wash stand, a couch and table. It was all especially clean.

Then a small parlor and a bedroom that had a feather tick and a straw mattress. The window opened and was so close to the creek that it lulled you to sleep along with the grandfather clock that sat on a table in the corner of the room.

Then by the stairs to the bedrooms was the granary where the grain was stored. Up the stairs above the granary was the smoke room where they cured their own meat and they had tables that they stored their winter's supply of flour and germade cereal. There was always a lot of good food to eat at Grandma's. She had home-made noodles drying, or nine milers, bratzilis, apple fritters. I loved them all.

The barn was built on the same order – everything compact and under one roof to save on ground. The barn, buggy shed, wagon shed, pig pen, chicken coop, then a high hay loft, the milking barn, and the toilet. It was wallpapered and was as clean as could be.

The barn floor was made of cobble rocks, and Grandma carried water from the creek and scrubbed it clean every day. Any milk inspector would have approved of it. She also had some chickens and two cows, Old Jersey and Brownie, that she milked every day. She sold the eggs and cream to still provide for herself before her death.

My father (Fredrick) was only 12 years old when his father died and had to accept the responsibility of helping to earn the living for the family. He is the one that helped Uncle John to get his education at BYU in music. He also helped Uncle Ern on his mission.

Grandfather worked on the Salt Lake Temple for 12 years. That is where Grandmother met him. He was converted to the Church by Ulrich Provost when he was a missionary in Switzerland.

After Grandmother was a widow the girls of the family tell this story: They had many carpet rags to tear each day (in long narrow strips) and sew (the ends) together before they could go out to play. Minnie decided if they tied the ends together (instead of sewing them) and put them on the inside of the ball, then they could hurry faster. So they did this until one day at Relief Society the president said someone was bringing carpet rags that were tied together (instead of sewed). Grandma came home from the meeting and went upstairs to the closet and rolled out all the balls and found it was her girls that were doing this. They really had to work for a long time to get caught up again and were checked on more carefully.

This is another story they told. Grandmother was a very good dressmaker and whenever she was gone from home her daughters dressed up in her best dresses. They loved to look back and see the dust swirling up from the bottom of the dresses. (Minnie

told her children that her mother always warned them as she went out the door not to put her dresses on, and that was the first thing they did.)

Grandfather was a very patient man and never got upset easily. Grandmother was more quick-tempered because of her burden of raising a large family without a father.

Grandfather died of pneumonia as Grandmother did also. When Grandfather died, Ida and Emma rode in the back of the wagon sitting in a little red rocking chair singing all the way to the cemetery. After they had buried Grandfather, Grandmother fainted, frightening Minnie and Bertha. They thought she had died, too.

Grandmother died in Daniel at the home of her daughter Minnie, who was caring for her during her last illness. She will always be remembered for her industry, thrift and hard-working cleanliness. She passed away July 2, 1924.

We, as their descendants, owe these great pioneers a reverent gratitude of thanks for the great people they were, to pave the way for us to enjoy the many blessings of plenty. We are especially grateful that our religion was given to us without hardships because of these wonderful grandparents.

Patriarchal Blessing

Salt Lake City, Utah, October 6, 1917

A Blessing given by Hyrum G. Smith, Patriarch, upon the head of Bertha Buehler Sonderegger, daughter of Solomon and Verena Haechler Buehler, born August 15, 1856.

Sister Sonderegger, according to thy desire, I place my hands upon thy head and give unto thee a patriarchal blessing. Thou art numbered among the daughters and mothers in the House of Israel, and thou art of the lineage of Ephraim. Thy name is written in the Chronicles of thy fathers.

Thou hast received many blessings in thy life, and thy faith has thus far pleased the Lord. He has heard thy petitions, and has seen thy devotions, and if thou wilt continue to honor Him; and praise Him for His mercies, He will strengthen thee in thy daily duties, cheer and comfort thee in thy home, and grant thee peace of mind. Therefore, continue in faith and remember the Lord in thanksgiving.

It will be thy privilege to continue to minister among thy sex, to cheer them along their journey and encourage them in their labors, and thy influence for good will continue with thee to the end of thy days. Friends will minister unto thee according to thy righteous needs, and because of thy faith and diligence in the past thou shalt not suffer for the comforts of this life, nor for the care of loving hands.

Therefore be comforted, be not discouraged, but look to the future with hope for the Lord has placed a tender watch care over thee, which will continue with thee to the end of thy journey providing thou art faithful and diligent. Peace will continue in the home and thy ministry shall avail much good, and in the end thou shalt be crowned with thy kindred and loved ones and those who have proved them worthy of the favors of the Lord....(one line illegible.)

This blessing I seal upon thy head in the name of Jesus Christ, and I seal thee up unto eternal life to come forth in the morning of the first resurrection with thy loved and dear ones. Even so, Amen



Top picture: Johannes (father), Bertha, Fred, Bertha Buehler (mother)
John, Louise, Minnie (baby in arms)

Bottom picture: family home in Midway, 4th West 50 North





Bertha -- earlier years



Bertha and her 5 daughters:

Top row: Minnie McDonald, Bertha Wilson, Louise Clegg
 Bottom Row: Ida Anderson, Emma Nelson, Bertha Sonderegger (mother)

The Sonderegger Family



Back Row: Louise, John, Fredrick, Bertha
Front Row: Ernest, Bertha (Mother), Johannes (Father), Emma, Ida, Minnie

The Sonderegger Brothers



John Ernest Fred

Photo of all of Bertha's and Johannes' children and their spouses.



(Husbands are directly behind their wife.)

From left to right: Fred and Merne Sonderegger, William and Bertha Wilson, Jesse and Emma Nelson, John and Pauline Sonderegger, Bob and Louise Clegg, Joseph C and Minnie McDonald, Charlie and Ida Anderson (Ernest died 3 Augst 1933. His wife Grace Watkins is not on the picture.

HUSBAND SONDEREGGER, Johannes (Stone Mason)

Birth 30 November 1830

Place Balgach, St Gallen, Switz

Chr. _____

Married _____

Place _____

Death 31 October 1893

Burial Midway, Wasatch, Utah

Father SONDEREGGER, Hans Ulrich

Mother* TORGLER, Anna Elizabeth

Other Wives (if any) (1) 27 Nov 1857 LEMP Anna Maria



WIFE (2) BUHLER, Bertha

Birth 15 August 1856

Place Rietheim, Zurzach, Aargau, Switz

Chr. _____

Death 2 July 1924

Burial Midway, Wasatch, Utah

Father BUHLER, Solomon

Mother* HACKLER, Verena

Other Wives (if any) _____

Where was information obtained? Sonderegger rec by Billeter

*List complete maiden name for all females.

FAMILY PORTRAIT



1st Child SONDEREGGER, Fredrick

Birth 28 December 1878

Place Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah

Married to BURT, Marien Lindsay

Married 25 December 1909

Place Midway, Wasatch, Utah

Death 27 December 1938



6th Child SONDEREGGER, Lena Ida

Birth 8 August 1887

Place Midway, Wasatch, Utah

Married to ANDERSON, Charles

Married 10 February 1906

Place _____



2nd Child SONDEREGGER, Bertha

Birth 22 June 1880

Place Midway, Wasatch, Utah

Married to WILSON, William Walter

Married 22 June 1903

Place _____

Death 22 March 1960



7th Child SONDEREGGER, Emma Cecelia

Birth 21 October 1888

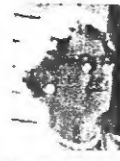
Place Midway, Wasatch, Utah

Married to NELSON, Jesse R

Married 26 November 1908

Place _____

Death 15 February 1960



3rd Child SONDEREGGER, John

Birth 27 November 1881

Place Midway, Wasatch, Utah

Married to GERDHART, Pauline

Married 22 June 1911

Place _____



8th Child SONDEREGGER, George

Birth 19 February 1890

Place Midway, Wasatch, Utah

Married to _____

Married _____

Place _____

Death 21 March 1891



4th Child SONDEREGGER, Louise Emily

Birth 10 November 1883

Place Midway, Wasatch, Utah

Married to CLEGG, Robert

Married 7 October 1903

Place _____

Death 9 April 1956



9th Child SONDEREGGER, Ernest Ervin

Birth 5 April 1892

Place Midway, Wasatch, Utah

Married to WATKINS, Grace

Married 3 September 1913

Place _____

3 August 1933



SONDEREGGER, Minnie

9 September 1885

Midway, Wasatch, Utah

o.1) WITT, James T (2) MC DONALD, Joseph C

6 June 1906

26 January 1960

Place Picture
of Child in
Left Blank

Place Picture
of Wife or
Husband in
Right Blank

Or Wedding Picture To Cover
Both Blanks

10th Child

Birth _____

Place _____

Married to _____

Married _____

Place _____